



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant : Arne W. Ballantine et al.
Serial No. : 09/896,268
Filed : June 29, 2001
Title : FUEL CELL SYSTEMS

Art Unit : 1745
Examiner : Angela Martin

Mail Stop Amendment
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

REPLY TO ACTION OF JANUARY 10, 2006

In reply to the Office Action of January 10, 2006, Applicants submit the following remarks.

Claims 1, 7-10, and 12-38 are pending in this application.

The Examiner rejected claims 24-29 under 35 USC § 102(e) as being anticipated by Roberts et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,329,089, "Roberts"). However, Roberts does not disclose monitoring voltages of a set of fuel cells and restricting coolant flow when one or more of the monitored voltages decreases from a predetermined voltage range, as required by claims 24-29.

In contrast, Roberts discloses methods of operating a fuel cell or fuel cell stack in which coolant flow during start-up is regulated based on a measured temperature parameter. For example, Roberts states that "during start-up, the fuel cell stack coolant (if present) is not circulated to allow rapid warming of the stack". (Roberts, col. 8, lines 35-37.) Roberts further states that:

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING BY FIRST CLASS MAIL

I hereby certify under 37 CFR §1.8(a) that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail with sufficient postage on the date indicated below and is addressed to the Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

April 12, 2006

Date of Deposit


Signature

Alisa Hocking

Typed or Printed Name of Person Signing Certificate